

~~Top Secret~~

# YUGOSLAVIA: Belgrade Faces Off With Separatists

The Yugoslav collective Presidency announced yesterday it will propose "urgent measures" by the end of the month to protect the territorial and political integrity of the country and deal with unconstitutional movements—a clear reference to Slovene and Croatian separatists. Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic, a Serb, said in his inaugural address Tuesday that the establishment of republic armies or separate currencies would undermine constitutional order and lead to civil war. Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman denounced the "threatening overtones" of Jovic's speech, and the Slovene Assembly established a commission to evaluate his "threats." The Slovene prime minister yesterday called for an independent Slovene army.

[REDACTED] The Presidency's call for urgent measures—anything from an economic boycott to military intervention—Jovic's speech, and the Croatian and Slovene responses have set the stage for a showdown between Belgrade and the northern republics. Urgent measures would further fuel separatist sentiments and might trigger ethnic violence. Jovic's statements appear consistent with the military's recent pronouncements that it will ensure the integrity of the Yugoslav federation and Constitution. But neither side appears willing to compromise on the key issues that would preserve the federation.

~~Top Secret~~

17 May 1990